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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a way to incorporate environmental education in the classroom through the preparation of teachers. The approach suggested is to train teachers to use literature in the humanities as focal points around which environmental issues can be discussed and analyzed in the classroom by students. Sections from one non-fiction work and two novels are used to demonstrate the complexities and interdependency of the bio-social ecology. The emphasis within the proposal is on the analysis of values as they relate to the handling of the various aspects of the environment. (CWB)

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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND A HUMANISTIC APPROACH TO TEACHER EDUCATION

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The emergence of environmental quality as a salient social issue creates additional demands in the preparation of elementary and secondary teachers. Teacher preparation demands a methodology spanning a myriad of substantitive, process, and affective components germane to a complex world and the subtleties of the teaching act. Both familiarity and competence prove necessary in dealing with themes, issues, and concepts inherent within the scope of social studies education. Regardless of the parameters one ascribes to the social studies, it becomes evident that increased sophistication in substantive scope and depth become attractive. The variety of themes, methodologies, and concepts contained in a single discipline contrasts and complements other social sciences and humanities. Although teachers stand to benefit from large substantive inputs and an awareness of constructs and data gathering techniques in varying fields of inquiry, a paring down frequently results in the concentration of a single discipline such as American history. At the elementary level, teachers lack social science competence due to their multiple roles. Teaching content from math to art makes naivete acceptable, if not attractive. The proliferation of environmental knowledge, issues, and problems fails to conform neatly to American history, problems in democracy, or the elementary grade's expanding environments. Viewpoints from a wide variety of social practitioners hold significance within the scope of potential social learning.

As THE "hot" new issues of our times, environmental quality looms as an intense, demanding topic for inclusion within the school curriculum and the preparation of teachers. Obviously, the remainder of human foibles fail to subside. Race, poverty, war, the "new" disciplines and traditional offerings make their demands upon the curriculum. Preparing teachers becomes a task of paying attention to established priorities while devoting time to developing competence in handling environmental issues. This paper seeks to elaborate

such a viable methodology for teacher preparation which melds the demands of established priorities with that of environmental quality. The approach utlizes "humanistic" literature as the substantive plank. From extensive substantive inputs, environmental questions mesh with broader conceptual themes and provides for the development of competencies across a broad spectrum. "Humanistic" literature refers to works of literature, philosophy, or popular history and excludes avowedly discipline oriented works designed for consumption in social science courses.

The basic structure of the proposed "humanistic" approach consists of the following central ideas:

1. The use of literature, philosophy, and popular history as the required reading for social studies methods courses.
2. The abandonment of social studies methods texts to be replaced by the "humanistic" literature.
3. The selection of "humanistic" works which blend environmental themes with other concepts and issues relevant to the social studies.
4. The use of environmental themes in the selected literature for the demonstration of competencies in lesson and unit development.
5. Analysis of the developed materials in light of major teaching strategies such as inquiry, deduction, and analysis of controversial issues.
6. Small group discussion and analysis of environmental and other major themes and concepts developed in the literature.

Developing the "humanistic" proposal implies that such preparation adapt to traditional methods courses while exploiting preparation characterized by performance modules of the teacher education models. The preceeding proposals may be implemented within the context of traditional class meetings. It does, however, demand the supplanting of continuous lecture based upon the social studies methods text. The "humanistic" approach assumes that competency may be developed without the traditional vehicles so easily demeaned by perceptive critics. Despite the push towards teacher education models, the pace of change implies that regularly alloted meetings with a single instructor will be experienced by a majority of undergraduates.

In the "Humanistic" approach, the vast substantive inputs needed for a broad knowledge of human behavior comes under direct attack. Concepts such as conflict, culture, social class, or cultural use of the environment become enigmas when an inadequate knowledge base exists. Likewise, the translation of ideas into classroom behavior requires competency based upon understanding. Recently developed teacher education models call for specific behaviors exemplified by the following.

1. Selection and translation into educational objectives the content of history, geography, sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science.
2. Appropriate resources for developing social science concepts.
3. Techniques for teaching controversial issues.
4. Concepts and generalizations from the social sciences appropriate for pupil inquiry.
5. Resource units, teaching units, and daily lesson plans.
6. Inquiry methods and materials.[1]

Even at the primary grade level of instruction, teachers need to select relevant data---be it from The Family of Man or Better Homes and Gardens---which cogently draws attention to issues and concepts such as environmental quality. The introduction of "humanistic" reading as the intellectual component combats the meager knowledge base common to so many teaching candidates as well as offering the raw data and ideas from which to demonstrate specific competencies from controversial issues to selection of visual materials. Thus, a dichotomous thrust blending two crucial needs of social studies teachers takes shape.

How then, will the "humanistic" approach function in specific settings whilst offering background in environmental issues? Several works constitute excellent examples. To be discussed will be The Abolition of Man by C. S. Lewis, The Pushcart War by Jean Merrill, and John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath. Each lends itself to group analysis and discussion, the identification of themes and concepts, the building of a more catholic perception, the translation of environmental ideas into curricular materials and experiences, and defining the relationship of environmental issues to adjunct social science data.

The Abolition of Man

Understanding values and their role in social studies education exists as a major need in the preparation of teachers. Whether it be controversial issues, analyses of "closed" areas, or the identification of historical causation, the significance of values, attitudes, and accompanying actions cannot be escaped. Man is a social and religious animal living in time and space. By his very essence, there is no such thing as the immaculate conception of political, religious, and social ideas. Be it environmental use, war, the planning of cities, or the breakdown of religious dogma, values and their antecedent weaving into a collective consciousness affects one's predisposition and ability to act. For the teacher, serious questions arise as to the role one should play in value ladened episodes as well as the moral truths which should be transmitted within the confines of the classroom. C. S. Lewis's treatise, The Abolition of Man deals directly with the teaching of values and the effects of relative thinking.

> I draw the following conclusions. This thing which I have called for convenience the Tao, and which others may call Natural Law or Traditional Morality or the First Principles of Practical Reason or the First Platitudes, is not one among a series of possible systems of value. It is the sole source of all value judgments. If it is rejected, all value is rejected.
>
> ..you cannot go on explaining away for ever: you will find that you have explained explanation itself away. You cannot go on 'seeing through' things for ever. The whole point of seeing through something is to see something through it. ...If you see through everything, then everything is transparent. But a wholly transparent world is an invisible world. To 'see through' all things is the same as not to see.

Lewis defines "laws" such as The Law of General Beneficience, The Law of Special Beneficience, and the Law of Justice which support his assertion that truth exists as a definite entity within collective human experience. If true, Lewis's Tao should help teachers define the beliefs which should be taught in the classroom.

In attacking contemporary thinking, Lewis offers an opportunity to focus

student thoughts upon their role as moral agents. What, if anything, should be taught as truth? By looking at issues through impartial eyes do we create Lewis's "Men Without Chests", sterile, vacuous people? Lewis's moral laws fail to take into account the proper use of the environment. But, if his central thesis holds, do teachers have the responsibility to identify the correct course for man's manipulation of and function in the environment? How ought the teacher who identifies the "Moral Law of the Environment" translate it into viable classroom experiences? Should population growth be controlled? Are there multiple paths to environmental salvation? What of conflicting cultural interpretations of environmental use? Does the wise use of resources for technically advanced societies mean the same responsibility as that in agrarian economies? Does the agrarian rape of Appalachia by rural whites match the pollution by urban technocrats? Is Erlich correct in asserting that the poor of American ghettoes or teeming Calcutta pose less a pollution threat than the affluent minority?

Ultimately, a work such as The Abolition of Man offers a platform from which to arouse awareness of the complexity of the value dimension placed upon the teacher of social studies. Lewis assumes a quasi-Christian stance built upon premises repleat with proofs. The Abolition of Man introduces undergraduates to the work of a theologian-scholar which contributes to their knowledge base. Lewis offers the opportunity to attack, support, or modify his ideas about the teaching act. He emphatically states his belief in moral absolutes and the need for their teaching. In effect, Lewis aids the development of competencies in working with controversial issues as well as identifying relevant social science application from abstract material. Rather than presenting statements about social studies in a democratic society from the first chapter of a methods text, Lewis forces discussion. He cannot be ignored.

The Pushcart War

A second exemplary work, Jean Merill's The Pushcart War differs from Lewis

in its whimsical tone. The Pushcart War deals with warfare in New York City, 1976. The introduction and a foreward by one Professor Lyman P. Cumberly places the war within the context of "the large object theory of history." Despite the obvious put-on, the need appears for developing conceptual sensitivity to events in New York City. The need for refining the complexity of social data becomes apparent as the most simplistic events of the New York war contain multiple causes. Thus, the task for students calls for the identification of concepts inherent in The Pushcart War as well as its translation into useable curriculum materials. At the onset, the war in New York appears to be strictly child's fare, but the lessons related to environment and social interaction quickly become obvious.

The Pushcart War represents conflict, a slow simmering confrontation between the pushcart peddlers and the large trucking companies. Pushcart vendors perform humble tasks of removing trash, selling flowers, and removing cartons. Truckers driving for Mammoth, Lema, and Tiger companies represent the physical muscle necessary to provide stores and businesses with goods and materials critical to mass merchandising, production, and communication. Space, that critical environmental element in urban life, finally creates physical confrontation between pushcarts and truckers.

> Morris had been parked in this spot for half an hour, and he was doing a good business. So he paid no attention to Mack. Mack pounded on his horn. Morris looked up then. "Why should I move" Morris asked. "I'm in business here."
>
> When Mack saw that Morris was not going to move, he backed up. Morris heard him gunning his engine, but did not look around. He supposed Mack was going to drive on down the block. But instead of that, Mack drove straight into the back of Morris' pushcart. Daffodils were flung for a hundred feet and Morris himself...was knocked into a pickle barrel...[3]

The physically imposing trucks initially drove the pushcarts from the streets. Through alliances, mass communication, and guerilla warfare, the pushcart peddlers warred with their enemies. In the end a negotiated settlement created mutually tolerable arrangements in which both parties performed their commercial functions.

Beneath the pleasant reading rests a wealth of data which can expand the undergraduate knowledge base as well as competencies calling for the identification of social science concepts, the development of teaching units, teaching of controversial issues, and the selection of appropriate learning strategies. Within the context of the New York war numerous social science concepts relevant across discipline lines may be found. Multiple causation, aggression, compromise, conflict, mass movements, and negotiation represent but a few that might be tapped. Even methodological techniques of the scholar emerge in the use of diary, newspaper, historical theories, and recorded conversations. Each concept may be related to contemporary and historical settings. All effect, or are effected by, the environmental problems which makes The Pushcart War possible. Indeed, the war became possible from the nature of environmental use. Population density, land use, and commercial patterns fostered conditions for conflict. In translating The Pushcart War into curricular materials with an environmental emphasis, students must demonstrate a broad range of social science understandings. Whether at the elementary or secondary level, value questions related to the environment appear.

1. What should take presedence in the urban environment, machines or people?
2. At what point must economic concentration give way to diffuse individual labor?
3. How might the city be arranged to avoid future pushcart wars?
4. How just were the claims of each faction?
5. What should be the nature of a city?

While the undergraduate expands his substantive base he develops analytic skills and carries abstract ideas into materials with classroom utility. The evaluation of the competencies by peers and faculty provides a critical appraisal of the selected teaching strategies, skills, scope, sequence, and psychological considerations in the organization of instruction.

The Grapes of Wrath

The Grapes of Wrath represents the final example of the "humanistic" approach. In Steinbeck's moving account of the parched depression, he depicts a tale reflecting ecological, emotional, and economic ravages.

> The dawn came, but no day. In the gray sky a red sun appeared, a dim red circle that gave a little light, like dusk; and as that day advanced, the dusk skipped back toward darkness, and the wind cried and whimpered over the fallen corn. [4]

Indeed, the migration of the Joads represents more than the inequities of capitalist finance. The parched land rebelled from continued agricultural castration of its virility. While exploiting the land beyond its measure to yield, the croppers of the dust bowl sealed their fate. Not only does The Grapes of Wrath illustrate environmental abuses, but the epic relates economic and political implications; the role of banking, consolidation of large farms, union vs. non-union standards, migration, social class, and dislocation. Like The Pushcart War, The Grapes of Wrath provides students an opportunity to enhance their intellectual background, demonstrate competence in specified tasks, and relate environmental problems to the scope of social science.

The complexity of ecological and social factors in The Grapes of Wrath suggests the following pattern within tne teacher education program.

1. Group discussion based upon the identification of major concepts and their interrelatedness.
2. Identification of environmental practices and their consequences as described and implied in the novel.
3. Identification of alternative agricultural practices which could have reduced or eliminated the drought and economic disaster.
4. The translation of the identified themes and concepts into teaching units with an environmental emphasis. For secondary teachers, the units would be based upon the novel, discussion, development of supplementary readings, simulation, identification of sensory materials, and the relationship of the novel to contemporary practices and problems. For elementary teachers, the novel would be employed as a problem in translation to equivalent materials. The unit would be predicated upon the study of agricultural techniques and their social consequences. Ideas could include concepts such as crop rotation, dry and strip farming, and the effects upon man of his environmental abuse.
5. The evaluation of the teaching materials by faculty and peers based upon scope, sequence, strategies, and psychological consideration.

In essense, The Grapes of Wrath offers a pediment from which to develop a wide range of identifiable competencies and increased intellectual sophistication.

In sum, the three works far from exhaust the sources which could be employed in a "humanistic" approach to environmental quality and teacher education. Each book illustrates the capacity for seemingly unrelated texts to impinge upon the pressing problem of our day. None bow to the pressure for instant environmental education to the exclusion of other demands upon the curriculum. Each work asserts the complexity of human behavior. The "humanistic" approach leads student and professor away from the combination of methods text and lecture and supplements criteria based programs with needed substantive inputs. In dealing with environmental ideas, the "humanistic" approach stresses intellectual growth along with specific competencies. Although stressing competence as evidenced in teacher education models, the "humanistic" approach proves adaptable to traditional meeting schedules and grouping. Essentially, the"humanistic" approach offers a flexibility, one which acknowledges the demands of established priorities, the press of a "hot" new issue, the need for competence, and the development of a greater knowledge base.

1. Charles E. Johnson, Gilbert F. Shearron and A. John Stauffer, "Georgia Education Model for the Preparation of Elementary Teachers-A Summary," Journal of Research and Development in Education, 2:74-79,86, Spring, 1969.

2. C. S. Lewis, The Abolition of Man, (New York, Macmillan Company., 1968), p.56,81.

3. Jean Merrill, The Pushcart War, (New York, Grosset and Dunlap, 1969), p. 15-16.

4. John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath, (New York, Bantam Books, 1966), p. 2.